

Docetaxel Consolidation Therapy Following Cisplatin, Vinorelbine, and Concurrent Thoracic Radiotherapy in Patients with Unresectable Stage III Non-small Cell Lung Cancer

Ikuo Sekine,* Hiroshi Nokihara,* Minako Sumi,† Nagahiro Saijo,‡
Yutaka Nishiwaki,§ Satoshi Ishikura,|| Kiyoshi Mori,¶ Iwao Tsukiyama,#
and Tomohide Tamura*

Background: To evaluate the feasibility and efficacy of docetaxel consolidation therapy after concurrent chemoradiotherapy for unresectable stage III non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).

Patients and Methods: The eligibility criteria included unresectable stage III NSCLC, no previous treatment, age between 20 and 74 years, and performance status 0 or 1. Treatment consisted of cisplatin (80 mg/m² on days 1, 29, and 57), vinorelbine (20 mg/m² on days 1, 8, 29, 36, 57, and 64), and thoracic radiotherapy (TRT) (60 Gy/30 fractions over 6 weeks starting on day 2), followed by consolidation docetaxel (60 mg/m² every 3 to 4 weeks for three cycles).

Results: Of 97 patients who were enrolled in this study between 2001 and 2003, 93 (76 males and 17 females with a median age of 60) could be evaluated. Chemoradiotherapy was well tolerated; three cycles of chemotherapy and 60 Gy of TRT were administered in 80 (86%) and 87 (94%) patients, respectively. Grade 3 or 4 neutropenia, esophagitis, and pneumonitis developed in 62, 11, and 3 patients, respectively. Docetaxel consolidation was administered in 59 (63%) patients, but three cycles were completed in only 34 (37%) patients. The most common reason for discontinuation was pneumonitis, which developed in 14 (24%) of the 59 patients. During consolidation therapy, grade 3 or 4 neutropenia, esophagitis, and pneumonitis developed in 51, 2, and 4 patients, respectively. A total of four patients died of pneumonitis. We calculated a V₂₀ (the percent volume of the normal lung receiving 20 Gy or more) on a dose-volume histogram in 25 patients. Of these, five patients developed grade 3 or more severe radiation pneumonitis. A median V₂₀ for these five patients was 35% (range, 26–40%), whereas the median V₂₀ for the remaining 20 patients was 30% (range, 17–35%) ($p =$

0.035 by a Mann–Whitney test). The response rate was 81.7% (95% confidence interval [CI], 72.7–88.0%), with 5 complete and 71 partial responses. The median progression-free survival was 12.8 (CI, 10.2–15.4) months, and median survival was 30.4 (CI, 24.5–36.3) months. The 1-, 2-, and 3-year survival rates were 80.7, 60.2, and 42.6%, respectively.

Conclusion: This regimen produced promising overall survival in patients with stage III NSCLC, but the vast majority of patients could not continue with the docetaxel consolidation because of toxicity.

Key Words: Non-small cell lung cancer, Chemoradiotherapy, Consolidation, Docetaxel.

(*J Thorac Oncol.* 2006;1: 810–815)

Locally advanced unresectable non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), stage IIIA with bulky N2 and stage IIIB disease without pleural effusion, is characterized by large primary lesions and/or involvement of the mediastinal or supraclavicular lymph nodes and occult systemic micrometastases. A combination of thoracic radiotherapy and chemotherapy is the standard medical treatment for this disease, but the optimal combination has not been established.¹ Although the available data are insufficient to accurately define the size of a potential benefit,² concurrent chemoradiotherapy using a platinum doublet has been shown to be superior to the sequential approach in phase III trials of this disease.^{3–5} However, third-generation cytotoxic agents, which have provided better patient survival with extrathoracic spread than the old-generation agents, must be reduced when administered concurrently with thoracic radiotherapy.⁶ Thus, it has been hypothesized that the addition of systemic dose chemotherapy with a new cytotoxic agent to concurrent chemoradiotherapy, either as induction or as consolidation chemotherapy, might further improve patient survival.¹

The consolidation chemotherapy with docetaxel was based on the observation that this drug was highly active in the primary treatment of metastatic NSCLC, producing a response rate (RR) as high as 20% after platinum-based chemotherapy failed.^{7–9} Highly encouraging results of a me-

Divisions of *Internal Medicine and Thoracic Oncology, and †Radiation Oncology, National Cancer Center Hospital, Tokyo, Japan; Divisions of ‡Internal Medicine, §Thoracic Oncology, and ||Radiation Oncology, National Cancer Center Hospital East, Kashiwa, Japan; and Divisions of ¶Thoracic Oncology and #Radiotherapy, Tochigi Cancer Center, Utsunomiya, Japan.

Address for correspondence: Ikuo Sekine, Division of Thoracic Oncology and Internal Medicine, National Cancer Center Hospital, Tsukiji 5-1-1, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0045, Japan. E-mail: isekine@ncc.go.jp

Copyright © 2006 by the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer

ISSN: 1556-0864/06/0108-0810

dian survival time (MST) of more than 2 years and a 3-year survival rate of nearly 40% were obtained in a phase II trial of docetaxel consolidation after chemoradiotherapy with cisplatin and etoposide in patients with stage IIIB NSCLC (SWOG study S9504).¹⁰

We have developed a combination chemotherapy schedule with cisplatin and vinorelbine concurrently administered with thoracic radiotherapy at a total dose of 60 Gy in 30 fractions in patients with unresectable stage III NSCLC. The results of a phase I study in 18 patients were very promising, with a RR of 83%, a MST of 30 months, and a 3-year survival rate of 50%.⁶ Thus, addition of docetaxel consolidation to this regimen is a particularly interesting therapeutic strategy. The objectives of the current study were to evaluate the feasibility of docetaxel consolidation therapy after concurrent chemoradiotherapy with cisplatin and vinorelbine and to evaluate the efficacy and safety of the whole treatment regimen including both the chemoradiotherapy and consolidation therapy in patients with unresectable stage IIIA and IIIB NSCLC.

PATIENTS AND METHODS

Patient Selection

The eligibility criteria were histologically or cytologically proven NSCLC; unresectable stage IIIA or IIIB disease; no previous treatment; measurable disease; tumor within an estimated irradiation field no larger than half the hemithorax; age between 20 and 74 years; Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group performance status (PS) of 0 or 1; adequate bone marrow function ($12.0 \times 10^9/\text{liter} \geq$ white blood cell [WBC] count $\geq 4.0 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, neutrophil count $\geq 2.0 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, hemoglobin ≥ 10.0 g/dl, and platelet count $\geq 100 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$), liver function (total bilirubin ≤ 1.5 mg/dl and transaminase no more than twice the upper limit of the normal value), and renal function (serum creatinine ≤ 1.5 mg/dl and creatinine clearance ≥ 60 ml per minute); and a PaO_2 of 70 torr or more under room air conditions. Patients were excluded if they had malignant pleural or pericardial effusion, active double cancer, a concomitant serious illness such as uncontrolled angina pectoris, myocardial infarction in the previous 3 months, heart failure, uncontrolled diabetes mellitus, uncontrolled hypertension, interstitial pneumonia or lung fibrosis identified by a chest x-ray, chronic obstructive lung disease, infection or other diseases contraindicating chemotherapy or radiotherapy, pregnancy, or if they were breast feeding. All patients gave their written informed consent.

Pretreatment Evaluation

The pretreatment assessment included a complete blood cell count and differential count, routine chemistry determinations, creatinine clearance, blood gas analysis, electrocardiogram, lung function testing, chest x-rays, chest computed tomographic (CT) scan, brain CT scan or magnetic resonance imaging, abdominal CT scan or ultrasonography, and radio-nuclide bone scan.

Treatment Schedule

Treatment consisted of a chemoradiotherapy phase with three cycles of cisplatin and vinorelbine followed by a con-

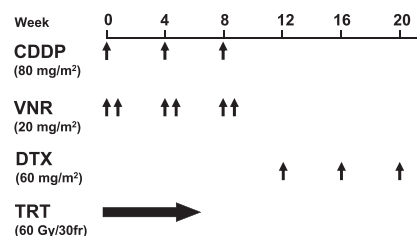


FIGURE 1. Treatment schema. CDDP, cisplatin; DTX, docetaxel; TRT, thoracic radiotherapy; VNR, vinorelbine.

solidation phase with three cycles of docetaxel (Figure 1). Cisplatin 80 mg/m² was administered on days 1, 29, and 57 by intravenous infusion for 60 minutes with 2500 to 3000 ml of fluid for hydration. Vinorelbine diluted in 50 ml of normal saline was administered intravenously on days 1, 8, 29, 36, 57, and 64. All patients received prophylactic antiemetic therapy consisting of a 5HT₃-antagonist and a steroid.

Radiation therapy was delivered with megavoltage equipment (≥ 6 MV) using anterior/posterior opposed fields up to 40 Gy in 20 fractions including the primary tumor, the metastatic lymph nodes, and the regional nodes. A booster dose of 20 Gy in 10 fractions was given to the primary tumor and the metastatic lymph nodes for a total dose of 60 Gy using bilateral oblique fields. A CT scan-based treatment planning was used in all patients. The clinical target volume (CTV) for the primary tumor was defined as the gross tumor volume (GTV) plus 1 cm taking account of subclinical extension. CTV and GTV for the metastatic nodes (>1 cm in shortest dimension) were the same. Regional nodes, excluding the contralateral hilar and supraclavicular nodes, were included in the CTV, but the lower mediastinal nodes were included only if the primary tumor was located in the lower lobe of the lung. The planning target volumes for the primary tumor, the metastatic lymph nodes, and regional nodes were determined as CTVs plus 0.5- to 1.0-cm margins laterally and 1.0- to 2.0-cm margins craniocaudally, taking account of setup variations and internal organ motion. Lung heterogeneity corrections were not used.

The criteria for starting consolidation chemotherapy were completion of three cycles of cisplatin and vinorelbine and a full dose of thoracic radiotherapy, the absence of progressive disease, adequate general condition within 6 weeks of the start of the third cycle of cisplatin and vinorelbine (PS 0 or 1, WBC count $\geq 3.0 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, neutrophil count $\geq 1.5 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, hemoglobin ≥ 9.0 g/dl and platelet count $\geq 100 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, total bilirubin ≤ 1.5 mg/dl and transaminase no more than twice the upper limit of the normal value, and a PaO_2 of 70 torr or more at room air). Docetaxel (60 mg/m²) was administered intravenously for 1 hour every 3 to 4 weeks for three cycles.

Toxicity Assessment and Treatment Modification

Complete blood cell counts and differential counts, routine chemistry determinations, and a chest x-ray were performed once a week during the course of treatment. Acute toxicity was graded according to the NCI Common Toxicity Criteria, and late toxicity associated with thoracic radiother-

apy was graded according to the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group/European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer late radiation morbidity scoring scheme. Vinorelbine administration on day 8 was omitted if any of the following were noted: WBC count $<3.0 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, neutrophil count $<1.5 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, platelet count $<100 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, elevated hepatic transaminase level or total serum bilirubin of at least grade 2, fever $\geq 38^\circ\text{C}$, or PS ≥ 2 . Subsequent cycles of cisplatin and vinorelbine chemotherapy were delayed if any of the following toxicities were noted on day 1: WBC count $<3.0 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, neutrophil count $<1.5 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, platelet count $<100 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, serum creatinine level $\geq 1.6 \text{ mg/dl}$, elevated hepatic transaminase level or total serum bilirubin of at least grade 2, fever $\geq 38^\circ\text{C}$, or PS ≥ 2 . The dose of cisplatin was reduced by 25% in all subsequent cycles if the serum creatinine level rose to 2.0 mg/dl or higher. The dose of vinorelbine or docetaxel was reduced by 25% in all subsequent cycles if any of the following toxicities were noted: WBC count $<1.0 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, platelet count $<10 \times 10^9/\text{liter}$, or grade 3 or 4 infection or liver dysfunction. Thoracic radiotherapy was suspended if any of the following were noted: fever $\geq 38^\circ\text{C}$, grade 3 esophagitis, PS of 3, or $\text{PaO}_2 < 70 \text{ torr}$. Thoracic radiotherapy was terminated if any of the following were noted: grade 4 esophagitis, grade 3 or 4 pneumonitis, PS of 4, or duration of radiotherapy of over 60 days. The use of granulocyte colony-stimulating factor during radiotherapy was not permitted unless radiotherapy was on hold. The criteria for termination of docetaxel consolidation were not defined in the protocol.

Response Evaluation

Objective tumor response was evaluated according to the Response Evaluation Criteria in Solid Tumor.¹¹ Local recurrence was defined as tumor progression in the primary site and in the hilar, mediastinal, and supraclavicular lymph nodes after a partial or complete response; regional recurrence as the development of malignant pleural and pericardial effusions; and distant recurrence as the appearance of a distant metastasis.

Study Design, Data Management, and Statistical Considerations

This study was conducted at three institutions: the National Cancer Center Hospital, National Cancer Center Hospital East, and Tochigi Cancer Center. The protocol and consent form were approved by the institutional review board of each institution. Registration was conducted at the registration center. Data management, periodic monitoring, and the final analysis were performed by the study coordinator.

The primary objective of the current study was to evaluate the feasibility of docetaxel consolidation therapy. The secondary endpoints were toxicity observed during chemoradiotherapy and consolidation therapy, the best response, and overall survival in all patients eligible to participate in this study. Because no standard method to evaluate consolidation chemotherapy after chemoradiotherapy has been established, we arbitrarily defined the primary endpoint of this study as a ratio (R) of the number of patients receiving docetaxel without grade 4 nonhematological toxicity or treat-

ment-related death to the total number of patients receiving docetaxel. The sample size was initially estimated to be 34 patients with a power of 0.80 at a significance level of 0.05, under the assumption that a R of 0.95 would indicate potential usefulness, whereas a R of 0.8 would be the lower limit of interest, and that 85% of patients would move into the consolidation phase. An analysis of the first 13 patients, however, showed that only 8 (61%) patients advanced into the consolidation phase. The reasons for not receiving docetaxel were disease progression in one, delay in completion of chemoradiotherapy in two, grade 3 esophagitis in one, and death due to hemoptysis in one patient. Considering that the SWOG trial S9504 included 83 patients, we decided to revise the number of patients in the current study. According to Simon's two-stage minimax design, the required number of patients was calculated to be 59 with a power of 0.80 at a significance level of 0.05, under the assumption that a R of 0.85 would indicate potential usefulness, whereas a R of 0.7 would be the lower limit of interest.¹² Assuming that 61% of registered patients would move into the consolidation phase, the sample size was determined to be 97 patients.

Overall survival time and progression-free survival time were estimated by the Kaplan-Meier method, and confidence intervals (CI) were based on Greenwood's formula.¹³ Overall survival time was measured from the date of registration to the date of death (from any cause) or to the last follow-up. Progression-free survival time was measured from the date of registration to the date of disease progression, death (from any cause), or the last follow-up. Patients who were lost to follow-up without event were censored at the date of their last known follow-up. A CI for RR was calculated using methods for exact binomial CIs. The Dr. SPSS II 11.0 for Windows software package (SPSS Japan Inc., Tokyo, Japan) was used for statistical analyses.

RESULTS

Registration and Characteristics of the Patients

A total of 97 patients were enrolled in this study between April 2001 and June 2003. Four patients were excluded from this study before the treatment was started because the radiation treatment planning disclosed that their tumors were too advanced for curative thoracic radiotherapy. Thus, 93 patients who received the protocol-defined treatment were the subjects of this analysis (Figure 2). There were 76 males and 17 females, with a median age of 60 (range 31–74). Body weight loss was less than 5% in 77 patients; adenocarcinoma histology was noted in 57 patients, and stage IIIA disease was noted in 41 patients (Table 1).

Treatment Delivery

Treatment delivery was generally well maintained in the chemoradiotherapy phase (Table 2). Full cycles of cisplatin and vinorelbine and the full dose of thoracic radiotherapy were administered in 80 (86%) and 87 (94%) patients, respectively. Delay in radiotherapy was less than 5 days in 61 (66%) patients. In contrast, the delivery of docetaxel was poor (Table 2). A total of 59 (63%) patients could enter the consolidation phase, and only 34 (37%) patients completed three cycles of docetaxel chemotherapy. The reasons for not

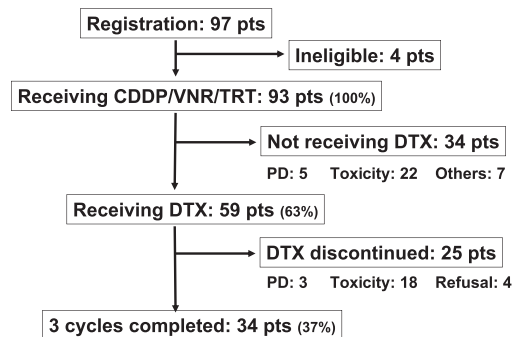


FIGURE 2. Patient registration. CDDP, cisplatin; DTX, docetaxel; TRT, thoracic radiotherapy; VNR, vinorelbine.

receiving consolidation were toxicity in 22 (65%) patients including pneumonitis in seven patients, myelosuppression in five patients, esophagitis in four patients, liver dysfunction in two patients, infection in two patients, other toxicity in two patients, progressive disease in five (15%) patients, patient refusal in three (9%) patients, early death due to hemoptysis in one (3%) patient, and other reasons in three (9%) patients. Of the 59 patients, 18 (31%) discontinued docetaxel consolidation because of toxicity, including pneumonitis ($n = 14$) and esophagitis, infection, gastric ulcer, and allergic reaction ($n = 1$ each), four (7%) because of patient refusal, and three (5%) because of progressive disease.

Toxicity

Acute severe toxicity in the chemoradiotherapy phase was mainly leukopenia and neutropenia, whereas grade 3 or 4 thrombocytopenia was not noted (Table 3). Severe nonhematological toxicity was sporadic, and grade 3 esophagitis and pneumonitis were observed in only 11 (12%) and 3 (3%) patients, respectively. Acute severe toxicity in the consolidation phase also consisted of neutropenia and associated in-

TABLE 1. Patient Characteristics

Characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	76	82
Female	17	18
Age median (range)	60	31–74
Weight loss		
<5%	76	81
5–9%	12	13
≥10%	3	3
Unknown	2	2
Histology		
Adenocarcinoma	57	61
Squamous cell carcinoma	23	25
Large cell carcinoma	12	13
Others	1	1
Stage		
IIIA	41	44
IIIB	52	56

TABLE 2. Treatment Delivery

Variables	<i>n</i>	%
Cisplatin and vinorelbine chemotherapy		
Total number of cycles		
3	80	86
2	10	11
1	3	3
Number of vinorelbine skips		
0	63	68
1	25	27
2–3	5	5
Thoracic radiotherapy		
Total dose (Gy)		
60	87	94
50–59	4	4
<50	2	2
Delay (days)		
<5	61	66
5–9	20	22
10–16	6	6
Not evaluable (<60 Gy)	6	6
Docetaxel consolidation		
Number of cycles		
3	34	37
2	12	13
1	13	14
0	34	34

fection (Table 4). In addition, grade 3 or 4 pneumonitis developed in 4 (7%) patients. The R observed in this study was 0.05 (3 out of 57 patients), which was much lower than the hypothetical value. Grade 3 or 4 late toxicities were included lung toxicity in four patients, esophageal toxicity in two patients, renal toxicity in one patient, and a second esophageal cancer that developed 35.4 months after the start of the chemoradiotherapy in one patient. Treatment-related

TABLE 3. Acute Toxicity in Chemoradiotherapy ($n = 93$)

Toxicity	Grade			%
	3	4	3 + 4	
Leukopenia	54	18	72	77
Neutropenia	33	29	62	67
Anemia	21	0	21	23
Infection	15	1	16	17
Esophagitis	11	0	11	12
Hyponatremia	11	0	11	12
Anorexia	9	1	10	11
Nausea	5	—	5	5
Pneumonitis	3	0	3	3
Syncope	2	0	2	2
Hyperkalemia	2	0	2	2
Ileus	0	1	1	1
Cardiac ischemia	1	0	1	1

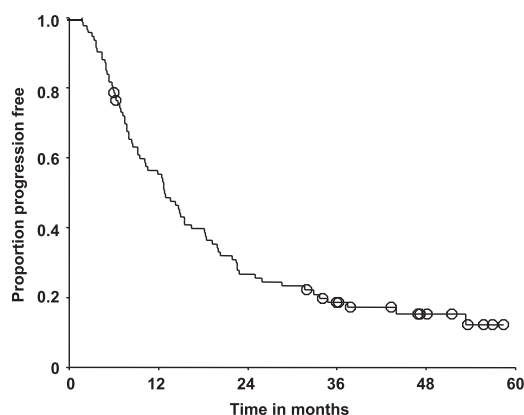
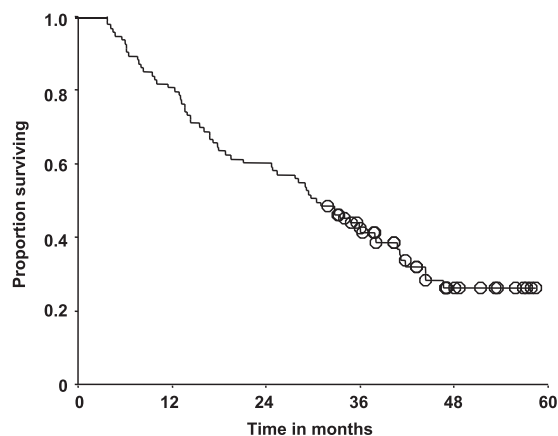
TABLE 4. Acute Toxicity in Consolidation Therapy (*n* = 57)

Toxicity	Grade			%
	3	4	3 + 4	
Leukopenia	33	11	44	77
Neutropenia	24	26	50	88
Anemia	5	0	5	9
Infection	5	1	6	11
Esophagitis	2	0	2	3
Anorexia	1	0	1	2
Pneumonitis	2	2	4	7

death was observed in four (4%) patients. Of these, three received docetaxel, and one did not. The reason for death was pneumonitis in all patients. We calculated a V_{20} (the percent volume of the normal lung receiving 20 Gy or more) on a dose-volume histogram in 25 patients. Of these, five patients developed grade 3 or severer radiation pneumonitis. A median V_{20} for these five patients was 35% (range, 26–40%), whereas that for the remaining 20 patients was 30% (range, 17–35%) ($p = 0.035$ by a Mann-Whitney test).

Objective Responses, Relapse Pattern, and Survival

All 93 patients were included in the analyses of tumor response and survival. Complete and partial responses were obtained in 5 (5%) and 71 patients (76%), respectively, for an overall RR of 81.7% (95% CI, 72.7–88.0%). Stable and progressive diseases occurred in 12 (13%) and 5 (5%) patients, respectively. With a median follow-up period of 29.7 months, 38 patients developed locoregional recurrence, 32 developed distant recurrence, 4 developed both locoregional and distant recurrences, and 19 did not. The median progression-free survival time was 12.8 (95% CI, 10.2–15.4) months (Figure 3). Two patients underwent salvage surgery for a recurrent primary tumors. Conventional chemotherapy and gefitinib monotherapy were administered after recurrence in 20 and 25 patients, respectively. The median overall survival time was 30.4 (95% CI,

**FIGURE 3.** Progression-free survival (*n* = 93). The median progression-free survival time was 12.8 (95% CI, 10.2–15.4) months.**FIGURE 4.** Overall survival (*n* = 93). The median overall survival time was 30.4 (95% CI, 25.4–35.4) months. The 1-, 2-, and 3-year survival rates were 80, 60, and 40%, respectively.

24.5–36.3) months. The 1-, 2-, and 3-year survival rates were 80.7, 60.2, and 42.6%, respectively. (Figure 4).

DISCUSSION

This study showed that concurrent chemoradiotherapy with cisplatin, vinorelbine, and standard thoracic radiotherapy was well tolerated, with a high completion rate exceeding 80%. The incidence of acute toxicity, including 67% (62/93) of grade 3 or 4 neutropenia, 12% (11/93) of grade 3 esophagitis, and 3% (3/93) of grade 3 pneumonitis, were comparable with other reports of concurrent chemoradiotherapy.^{3,4,10} In contrast, consolidation docetaxel could be administered in only 59 of 93 (63%) patients eligible to participate in this study. Of the remaining 34 patients, 22 (65%) patients did not receive consolidation chemotherapy because of toxicities affecting various organs. Other studies also showed that not all patients proceeded to the consolidation phase after completion of concurrent chemoradiotherapy: 61 to 78% of patients after two cycles of cisplatin and etoposide with radiotherapy,^{3,10} and 54 to 75% of patients after weekly carboplatin and paclitaxel with radiotherapy.^{14,15} Thus, for 20 to 40% of the patients, concurrent chemoradiotherapy was as much as they could undergo, and the additional chemotherapy was not practical.

Furthermore, the number of patients who fulfilled the three cycles of consolidation docetaxel was only 34 (58%) of the 59 patients, which corresponded to only 37% of those eligible in this study. The reason for the termination of docetaxel in the 25 patients was toxicity in 18 (72%) patients, especially pneumonitis in 14 (56%) patients. The grade of pneumonitis during the consolidation phase was within grade 2 in most cases, and this was probably because docetaxel was discontinued early. Considering that pneumonitis associated with cancer treatment is more common in Japan, docetaxel consolidation is not thought to be feasible in the Japanese population. The MST and the 3-year survival rate in all eligible patients were 33 months and 44% in this study, but docetaxel consolidation was unlikely to contribute to these promising results because only 37% of patients received full cycles of docetaxel. This contrasts clearly with the result of

the SWOG study S9504, a phase II trial of two cycles of cisplatin and etoposide with thoracic radiation followed by three cycles of docetaxel. In this trial, 75% of patients starting consolidation and 59% of those entering the trial received full cycles. In addition, docetaxel consolidation seemed to prolong survival, although this was drawn from a retrospective comparison of the results between the two SWOG studies S9504 and S9019.¹⁰

There is no widely used definition of consolidation therapy following chemoradiotherapy. Given that consolidation therapy is arbitrarily defined as chemotherapy with three cycles or more after the completion of concurrent chemoradiotherapy, only one randomized trial is available in the literature. The randomized phase III trial of standard chemoradiotherapy with carboplatin and paclitaxel followed by either weekly paclitaxel or observation in patients with stage III NSCLC showed that only 54% of patients proceeded to randomization, and overall survival was worse in the consolidation arm (MST, 16 versus 27 months).¹⁵ Thus, there have been no data supporting the use of consolidation therapy, especially when a third-generation cytotoxic agent such as paclitaxel and vinorelbine is incorporated into concurrent chemoradiation therapy.

The low complete-response rate of 5% in this study may be explained partly by an inability to distinguish between inactive scarring or necrotic tumor and active tumor after radiotherapy. Positron emission tomography (PET) using 18F-fluorodeoxyglucose showed a much higher rate of complete response than conventional CT scanning and provided a better correlation of the response assessment using PET with patterns of failure and patient survival.¹⁶ In addition, the high locoregional relapse rate in this study clearly showed that the conventional total dose of 60 Gy was insufficient. Three-dimensional treatment planning, omission of elective nodal irradiation, and precise evaluation of the gross tumor volume by PET may facilitate the escalation of the total radiation dose without enhanced toxicity.

In conclusion, cisplatin and vinorelbine chemotherapy concurrently combined with standard thoracic radiotherapy and followed by docetaxel consolidation produced promising overall survival in patients with stage III NSCLC, but the vast majority of patients could not continue with the docetaxel consolidation because of toxicity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank residents and staff doctors in the National Cancer Center Hospital, National Cancer Center Hospital East, and Tochigi Cancer Center for their care of patients and valuable suggestions and comments on this study. We would also like to thank Fumiko Koh, Yuko Yabe, and Mika Nagai for preparation of the manuscript.

This study was supported in part by Grants-in-Aid for Cancer Research from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan.

REFERENCES

1. Vokes EE, Crawford J, Bogart J, et al. Concurrent chemoradiotherapy for unresectable stage III non-small cell lung cancer. *Clin Cancer Res* 2006;11:5045s–5050s.
2. Auperin A, Le Pechoux C, Pignon JP, et al. Concomitant radio-chemotherapy based on platin compounds in patients with locally advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC): a meta-analysis of individual data from 1764 patients. *Ann Oncol* 2006;17:473–483.
3. Fournel P, Robinet G, Thomas P, et al. Randomized phase III trial of sequential chemoradiotherapy compared with concurrent chemoradiotherapy in locally advanced non-small-cell lung cancer: Groupe Lyon-Saint-Etienne d'Oncologie Thoracique-Groupeqfrancaisqqq de Pneumo-Cancerologie NPC 95-01 Study. *J Clin Oncol* 2006;23:5910–5917.
4. Furuse K, Fukuoka M, Kawahara M, et al. Phase III study of concurrent versus sequential thoracic radiotherapy in combination with mitomycin, vindesine, and cisplatin in unresectable stage III non-small-cell lung cancer. *J Clin Oncol* 1999;17:2692–2699.
5. Curran W, Scott CJ, Langer C, et al. Long-term benefit is observed in a phase III comparison of sequential vs concurrent chemo-radiation for patients with unresected stage III NSCLC: RTOG 9410. *Proc Am Soc Clin Oncol* 2003;22:621 (abstr 2499).
6. Sekine I, Noda K, Oshita F, et al. Phase I study of cisplatin, vinorelbine, and concurrent thoracic radiotherapy for unresectable stage III non-small cell lung cancer. *Cancer Sci* 2004;95:691–695.
7. Fossella FV, DeVore R, Kerr RN, et al. Randomized phase III trial of docetaxel versus vinorelbine or ifosfamide in patients with advanced non-small-cell lung cancer previously treated with platinum-containing chemotherapy regimens. The TAX 320 Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Study Group. *J Clin Oncol* 2000;18:2354–2362.
8. Shepherd FA, Dancey J, Ramlau R, et al. Prospective randomized trial of docetaxel versus best supportive care in patients with non-small-cell lung cancer previously treated with platinum-based chemotherapy. *J Clin Oncol* 2000;18:2095–2103.
9. Fossella FV, Lee JS, Shin DM, et al. Phase II study of docetaxel for advanced or metastatic platinum-refractory non-small-cell lung cancer. *J Clin Oncol* 1995;13:645–651.
10. Gandara DR, Chansky K, Albain KS, et al. Consolidation docetaxel after concurrent chemoradiotherapy in stage IIIB non-small-cell lung cancer: phase II Southwest Oncology Group Study S9504. *J Clin Oncol* 2003; 21:2004–2010.
11. Therasse P, Arbuck SG, Eisenhauer EA, et al. New guidelines to evaluate the response to treatment in solid tumors. European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer, National Cancer Institute of the United States, National Cancer Institute of Canada. *J Natl Cancer Inst* 2000;92: 205–216.
12. Simon R. Optimal two-stage designs for phase II clinical trials. *Control Clin Trials* 1989;10:1–10.
13. Armitage P, Berry G, Matthews J. Survival analysis. In Armitage P, Berry G, Matthews J (eds.), *Statistical Methods in Medical Research* (4th ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Science Ltd, 2002, pp. 568–590.
14. Belani CP, Choy H, Bonomi P, et al. Combined chemoradiotherapy regimens of paclitaxel and carboplatin for locally advanced non-small-cell lung cancer: a randomized phase II locally advanced multi-modality protocol. *J Clin Oncol* 2006;23:5883–5891.
15. Carter D, Keller A, Tolley R, et al. A randomized phase III trial of combined paclitaxel, carboplatin, and radiation therapy followed by either weekly paclitaxel or observation in patients with stage III non-small cell lung cancer. *Proc Am Soc Clin Oncol* 2006;22:635s (abstr 7076).
16. Mac Manus MP, Hicks RJ, Matthews JP, et al. Metabolic (FDG-PET) response after radical radiotherapy/chemoradiotherapy for non-small cell lung cancer correlates with patterns of failure. *Lung Cancer* 2006; 49:95–108.